

**SPEECH BY MR RAYMOND LIM, MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND
SECOND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE OFFICIAL
LAUNCH OF MARINA SOUTH PIER ON 30 JUNE 2006, 8.00PM AT
MARINA SOUTH PIER**

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening.

I am very pleased to join you this evening for the official opening of the Marina South Pier, a significant milestone for MPA, especially as it is also celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year.

Clifford Pier slated to be lifestyle hub

2 In April this year, Clifford Pier officially closed as a public landing point after 73 years, and is slated to be developed into a lifestyle and retail hub. The new lease of life for the historic Clifford Pier is part of a string of major developments planned along the waterfront of Marina Bay such as the Singapore Flyer, Marina Integrated Resort and the Marina Barrage. When fully redeveloped, the Marina Bay area will realize the national vision of being Singapore's first "reservoir within the city" and an integrated watersports hub cum premier tourist attraction.

3 Throughout its long and illustrious history, Clifford Pier as a leading Singapore landmark has been an integral part of our cultural heritage and maritime history. On a personal level, I am sure the Pier also holds fond memories for many people. Fortunately, the good news for us is that as a conserved building, the original structures of the Pier will be retained.

Marina South Pier – A New Maritime Gateway

4 For the ferry vessels and cruise operators, the new Marina South Pier that we are standing on today is the new waterfront gateway that MPA has built to replace Clifford Pier. This new pier will serve as a landing point for boats serving the large vessels anchored at the south-eastern waters of the Singapore port. Like Clifford Pier, the Marina South Pier will also serve passengers going to the southern islands such as Kusu and St John's Islands.

5 This spacious two-storey terminal building, with a capacity of up to 3,000 passengers, will offer better traffic flow, which will be especially helpful during peak travelling periods like the Kusu Pilgrimage season. The facility has also been developed with security in mind. For example, it features a dedicated checkpoint area managed by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority.

6 The Marina South Pier offers its visitors spectacular views of the sea. With a unique design featuring a roof shelter that very aptly resembles a wave, the building adds a beautiful touch to Singapore's waterfront landscape. I am confident that the Marina South Pier will help shape the future of Singapore's waterfront lifestyle and leisure scene in the Marina Bay area.

Attracting Quality Manpower

7 I am also happy to note that in marking the launch of Marina South Pier and its 10th anniversary, MPA, in partnership with several maritime organisations, has organised Singapore's first "Maritime Open House" earlier today. This is an important step for us to convey the challenges and opportunities of the maritime industry to the public, especially the younger generation.

8 I understand that more than 1,000 students and teachers from secondary schools, junior colleges and tertiary institutions across Singapore participated in the Open House. The event highlighted the various maritime education programmes, and showcased the challenging and rewarding career options available in the maritime industry. The students were also given a guided sea tour around Singapore's port waters. Such outreach programmes are important to help us attract a greater pool of talent to join the maritime industry.

9 Ladies and Gentlemen, our investment in developing Marina South Pier as a significant maritime landmark for the next generation mirrors our commitment to invest in the future of Singapore's maritime industry. An important aspect of strengthening our future as a hub port and an International Maritime Centre (or IMC) is the continued focus on building a pool of high calibre workforce. This is especially important at a time when the maritime industry has achieved exceptional growth, generating many challenges and exciting career opportunities. The attractiveness of these opportunities will help draw in a fair share of talent, and quality manpower. But we must also facilitate it by improving the image of the industry and raising awareness amongst the younger generation of the many maritime career options available.

Celebrating MPA's 10th Anniversary

10 I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate MPA on its 10th Anniversary and its achievements over the past decade.

11 Since its formation in 1996, MPA has put in much effort to enhance Singapore's status as a global hub port. As it grew from being a regulator to take on promotional roles and becoming the champion agency spearheading Singapore's development as a leading International Maritime Centre, MPA has successfully built up an international cluster of maritime businesses in Singapore. MPA's efforts, together with the strong support given by our partners in the maritime industry, have contributed to the sterling results seen in the industry.

12 In 2005, we established record performances in shipping tonnage, container throughput and bunker sales. I am pleased to note that in the first five months of this year, total vessel calls in terms of tonnage reached 533 million gross tons, an increase of 15 per cent from the same period last year. Container throughput reached some 9.8 million TEUs, which is 4 per cent higher compared to the first five months of last year. In spite of rising oil prices, more than 11.3 million tonnes of bunkers were sold in the port between January and May this year. This is an increase of 11 per cent from the same period last year.

13 I congratulate MPA on its outstanding performance in enhancing Singapore's maritime sector in the past 10 years. As it is with the opening of the Marina South Pier, we are standing at the opening of a new chapter for MPA. I look forward to its continued good work in the years to come.

14 Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, I would like to wish all of you a very enjoyable evening.

Thank you.